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Senator Brown Calls on Governor to Hire More Gas Station Inspectors in Letter

LANSING – Sen. Cameron Brown, R-Fawn River Township, has written Gov. Granholm today, requesting that she adhere to an appropriations bill she signed into law that would save Michigan consumers hundreds of millions of dollars at the gas pump.

In his letter, Brown presses the governor to spend the \$1.3 million appropriated by the Legislature nearly 11 months ago that would hire up to 17 new gas-pump inspectors.

A 2004 study showed that Michigan motorists are overpaying at least \$300 million annually at the pump due to poor quality and quantity compliance rates. In response, the Michigan legislature allocated \$1.3 million to hire additional pump inspectors. To date, however, not a single new inspector has been hired by the Granholm administration. Instead, it appears the funds will go unused.

“Michigan motorists have overpaid hundreds of millions of dollars a time when they can least afford it,” Brown wrote to the governor. “As the citizens and businesses of Michigan struggle to cope with skyrocketing prices, they deserve this protection from their state government.”

As chairman of the Senate Appropriations Agriculture Subcommittee, Sen. Brown said he would hold special hearings on the issue if the administration continues its delay.

The Michigan Department of Agriculture study found that Michigan’s gas pump quality and quantity compliance rates were well below the national average. According to the report, only 71 percent of Michigan gas pumps were dispensing the quality of gasoline they indicated, while only 88 percent were accurately measuring the amount being pumped. Both figures were well below the national averages of 95 percent.

Granholm signed the bill into law in September of last year, but as of yet has not authorized the hiring of the inspectors.

“Eleven months after you signed the MDA budget into law, Michigan motorists are not only paying record amounts at the pump, but are also, in many cases, paying for more gas than they are actually receiving or for lower quality gas than they are expecting because of the lack of new inspectors,” Brown wrote.

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Editor’s note: Comments from Sen. Brown can be downloaded from the Michigan Senate Republican Majority audiowire at: www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/audiowire .



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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, ALTERNATE

August 19, 2005

The Honorable Jennifer M. Granholm
Governor of Michigan
State Capitol
PO Box 30013
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Governor Granholm,

As gasoline prices soar to nearly three dollars per gallon, an action available to you to provide some measure of relief to Michigan motorists has gone begging for nearly eleven months.

As you are aware, a 2004 Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA) study found that our state's gas pump quality and quantity compliance rates are well below the national average. According to the report, only 71 percent of Michigan gas pumps are dispensing the quality of gasoline they indicate, while only 88 percent are accurately measuring the amount being pumped. Both figures are well below the national averages of 95 percent. These poor compliance rates mean that Michigan consumers are being overcharged more than \$300 million per year at the pump.

In light of these findings, the Michigan Legislature approved the appropriation of \$1.3 million in Fiscal Year 2004/2005 to allow the MDA to hire additional gas station inspectors and improve our compliance rates. This measure passed both the House of Representatives and the Senate in the fall of last year and was approved with your signature on September 30th, 2004. However, as of today, not a single new inspector has been hired, and your administration has allowed the funds to lapse. Therefore, eleven months after you signed the MDA budget into law, Michigan motorists are not only paying record amounts at the pump, but are also, in many cases, paying for more gas than they are actually receiving or for lower quality gas than they are expecting because of the lack of new inspectors. Michigan motorists have overpaid hundreds of millions of dollars a time when they can least afford it.

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Though valuable time and money have already been wasted, I again implore you to adhere to the appropriation outlined in Public Act 353 of 2004 and authorize the hiring of the new gas station inspectors. As the citizens and businesses of Michigan struggle to cope with skyrocketing prices, they deserve this protection from their state government.

If no action is taken on this important matter, I plan to convene a special meeting of the Senate Appropriations Agriculture Subcommittee that I chair to ask the MDA and your administration for an explanation. It is my hope that no such action is necessary and that we can instead work together to protect Michigan families at the pump.

Respectfully,

CAMERON S. BROWN
State Senator
16th District